

## Press release

### Judge David D. Kiely presented Sgt. Steven P. Mennemeyer Memorial Award

On May 9, Vanderburgh Circuit Court Judge David D. Kiely was presented with the Sgt. Steven P. Mennemeyer Memorial Award at the 2024 Justice Services Conference in Indianapolis, IN.

The award is given each year in memory of Army Sgt. Mennemeyer, who died Aug. 8, 2006 while serving during Operation Iraqi Freedom. It is presented to someone who has made the most significant impact, achievement, or contribution to veterans in Indiana through their work in the criminal justice system.

Judge Kiely brought the first Veterans Court to the state of Indiana. He has supervised the Vanderburgh County Veterans Court since 2011 and has seen 58 veterans graduate from the program. Judge Kiely has harnessed local organizations and support for veterans as part of the Veterans Court program. As the founder and leader of Veterans Court, Judge Kiely heads the community effort – the Court, Probation, Prosecution, Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, local law enforcement, and community treatment professionals- to work together to benefit veterans in the justice system. Because of this alliance, veterans receive mental health and substance abuse treatment, receive assistance with housing and employment, receive assistance with veteran benefits and driver's licenses and are put on a path to recovery and a positive lifestyle.

David Lehrsall – Vet Court Mentor Coordinator and Point Man Ministries- “I have learned that Judge Kiely's court is more than consistent and just. It is also compassionate and caring. I've watched veterans in the program begin as hurting, tight-lipped, passive-aggressive participants looking to simply avoid more jail time. The court patiently works through this phase and continuously works to get each participant into individualized programs that heal and help them move forward. It is deeply moving to hear these veterans say, “I would be dead now if it weren't for this program” or “My family is talking to me again.” I learn to know these veterans and I am grateful to Judge Kiely's court.”

Rocky Peppers – Veteran's Justice Outreach Coordinator and former combat Marine – “His calm, respectful, yet no nonsense presence and communication style has seemingly always been effective (even by those he was admonishing at times) and certainly something to admire.” Judge Kiely's level of compassion, candor, mutual respect and commitment will always be etched in my mind as something to try and emulate and I feel privileged to have been able to learn from Judge Kiely. Myself and others will be eternally grateful for his pioneering work and dedication throughout the years.”

Judge Gary J. Schutte -Vanderburgh Superior Court- “Judge Kiely is the type of judicial officer that invokes confidence in the judiciary-he is fair, just, upholds the law, all while being compassionate, patient, and kind. He is not afraid of hard work.” “He is able to have difficult conversations with veterans while encouraging and inspiring them.” “Serving the veteran population in Vanderburgh County is a passion for Judge Kiely. He is at ease and comfortable when interacting with the veteran participants. He is kind and encouraging to participants yet firm and accountable when necessary. He is constantly looking to grow, develop, and expand Veterans Court for the betterment of veterans.”

Heather Supples – Vet Court participant from 2012 – 2015- “When I first met Judge Kiely I knew that I did not want to disappoint him. This was the beginning of my recovery. My life would not be the same without the help from Judge Kiely and the Vet Program.”

Jonathan Haygood – Veterans Court participant- “I want to take the time to personally take the time to thank Judge Kiely. He has shown empathy towards many of us on our journey to self-improvement. Since I first met him he took the time to get to know me personally. I hope he continues to bless others as he has blessed me.”

“This award makes me smile. Our team worked together and wonderful things happened. I thank all veterans for their service. And those veterans in my court, I thank you for your trust, effort and success. For your success is what keeps our team smiling and happy to work hard for veterans in the future.”  
David D. Kiely

Feb 16, 2024

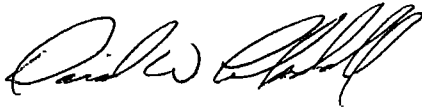
Mennemeyer Award Committee,

I am very proud to be associated with Judge David Kiely's Vanderburgh County Veterans Treatment Court. I enthusiastically recommend him for the SGT Steven P Mennemeyer Memorial Award. As a Vietnam veteran, with concerns about how veterans in the system might be treated, I volunteered to serve as a veterans' mentor. I have been a mentor for years and for the last two years I've been the coordinator of our veterans' support group mentors in Judge Kiely's court. I could not have been more pleasantly surprised by this experience.

I have learned that Judge Kiely's court is more than consistent and just. It is also compassionate and caring. I've watched veterans in the program begin as hurting, tight-lipped, passive-aggressive participants looking to simply avoid more jail time. The court patiently works through this phase and continuously works to get each participant into individualized programs that heal and help them move forward. I look forward to asking participants later how they feel about the program. It is deeply moving to hear these veterans say, "I would be dead now if it weren't for this program" or "My family is talking to me again." I learn to know these veterans and I am grateful to Judge Kiely's court, because I see them get their lives back again.

Judge Kiely's dedication to this program and to veterans has been outstanding. I have asked him many times to speak as we met with groups in search of mentor candidates. Each time he has shared with these groups how the program works. I also asked him to assist as we began a Vet Court softball team, and he responded by joining our team lineup. He's not a bad athlete or team member either! Judge Kiely has always found time to support our veterans, or any activity related to the Veterans Treatment Court. We will miss his professionalism and compassion as he retires this year. He has been a true supporter of veterans.

David Lehrschaal

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Lehrschaal', with a stylized, cursive script.

Vet Court Mentor Coordinator  
Point Man Ministries

March 19, 2024

To: Whom It May Concern

From: Rocky Peppers

Subj: Sgt. Steven P. Mennemeyer Memorial Award

This letter serves to nominate Judge David Kiely for the distinguished Sgt. Steven P. Mennemeyer Memorial Award.

I am a former combat Marine and have been employed with the Veteran's Health Administration (VHA) since 2008 serving in various roles. Currently I am the Veteran's Justice Outreach Coordinator (VJOC) for the Evansville Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC). I have had the honor and privilege of working with Judge Kiely since approximately 2012.

Judge Kiely was instrumental in creating and implementing the first Veteran's Treatment Court (VTC) in the State of Indiana. Currently it is reported that there upwards of 28 VTCs now in Indiana.

Because research has consistently demonstrated that VTCs are the single most effective treatment modality in combatting mental health and/or substance abuse issues, Judge Kiely vision and dedication to making sure that VTC's came into existence in Indiana has been immeasurable. I have personally seen hundreds of Veterans whose lives have been totally transformed by their participation in a VTC.

It is also important to understand the character of Judge Kiely. Since 2012 I have had time to observe how he interacts with others. Despite whatever situations (and no matter how tense interactions have been), I have continued to admire how Judge Kiely interacts with others.

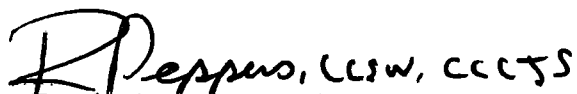
Regardless of how intense a situation might be the way in which Judge Kiely has navigated even the most stressful interactions have left me (and others) in awe. His calm, respectful, yet no nonsense presence and communication style has seemingly always been effective (even by those he was admonishing at times) and certainly something to admire.

It is with great honor that I was asked to submit a nomination for the prestigious Sgt. Steven P. Mennemeyer Memorial Award; however, I am certain this letter falls terribly short in accurately conveying how groundbreaking Judge Kiely's vision and accomplishments have been in the lives of fellow Veterans and their families.

Judge Kiely's level of compassion, candor, mutual respect and commitment will always be etched in my mind as something to try and emulate and I feel privileged to have been able to learn from Judge Kiely. Myself and others will be eternally grateful for his pioneering work and dedication throughout the years.

Although Judge Kiely will be missed and has left an indelible mark on others, what's probably even more important is that he has also ensured a smooth transition after his departure by ensuring that he constantly educated VTC staff on doing things the correct way, while also training two other Judges who have expressed a commitment and have been carrying on Judge Kiely's work.

Respectfully,

Handwritten signature of Rocky Peppers in black ink, with the name 'Rocky Peppers' clearly legible and followed by the initials 'LCSW, CCCJS'.

Rocky Peppers, LCSW, CCCJS

Veteran's Justice Outreach Coordinator

Evansville Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC)

Evansville, In 47715

Phone: 618-922-9059 (work cell)



# VANDERBURGH SUPERIOR COURT

**Judge Gary J. Schutte**

**Probate - Juvenile Division**

Administration Building, Suite 129 • Civic Center Complex

1 NW ML King Jr. Blvd • Evansville, IN 47708-1806

Telephone: (812) 435-5126 • Fax: (812) 435-5043

Dear Members of the Mennemeyer Award Committee:

Please allow this correspondence to serve as my letter of support for the nomination of Judge David Kiely for the Sgt. Steven P. Mennemeyer Memorial Award. My name is Gary Schutte, and I am a Superior Court Judge in Vanderburgh County. Prior to joining the bench, I had the fortune of practicing in front of Judge Kiely as a Deputy Prosecutor, and later Chief Deputy Prosecutor, from 2003 to 2019. I then had the honor of serving as a Magistrate for Judge Kiely from 2019 until I was appointed to Superior Court in September 2020.

During my time in the Prosecutor's Office, I tried multiple cases in front of Judge Kiely. Judge Kiely is the type of judicial officer that invokes confidence in the judiciary – he is fair, just, upholds the law, all while being compassionate, patient, and kind.

Judge Kiely is also not afraid of hard work – whether that is in the courtroom or handling the administrative side of the job. He is not afraid to ask why something is being done a certain way or question whether it can be done differently, better, or more efficiently. He tends to do what others do not want to do and does not shy away from difficult situations. He is able to have difficult conversations with veterans while encouraging and inspiring them.

Serving the veteran population in Vanderburgh County is a passion for Judge Kiely. He is at ease and comfortable when interacting with the veteran participants. He is kind and encouraging to participants yet firm and accountable when necessary. He is constantly looking to grow, develop, and expand Veterans Court for the betterment of veterans.

I sincerely believe Judge David Kiely is deserving of this award because of his dedication to and impact on veterans in the criminal justice system in Vanderburgh County. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Gary J. Schutte

Judge, Vanderburgh Superior Court



VANDERBURGH COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER AGENCY

1 N.W Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard

Room 202, Administration Building

Evansville, IN 47708

Phone: (812) 435-5900 Fax: (812) 435-5901

STEPHEN H. OWENS  
CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER

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Mennemeyer Award Committee,

I would like to offer my support to Judge David Kiely to receive the Mennemeyer award at the 2024 Justice Services Conference.

I have served the treatment court team in Vanderburgh County as the deputy prosecutor, Director of Community Corrections and am currently the participant advocate for Veterans Court. Judge Kiely has worked to ensure Veterans receive the support they need by developing partnerships with community providers. He has provided for the continuation of Veterans Court by including two of his magistrates in the team. Team development remains a core goal. Judge Kiely developed a mentor program and participates in their continued training. He participates weekly in the team meetings and court sessions. He played softball with the team this summer and works hard to help the veterans develop pro-social skills.

His support for the program, ensures its continued growth and longevity securing that Vanderburgh County will be able to provide this service to veterans in the future.

Jodi Uebelhack

March 1, 2024

Heather Supples

5304 Chadwick Rd

Evansville, IN 47710

It is a pleasure to write this letter in support of Judge Kiely. I was a Vet Court participant from 2012 – 2015.

When I first met Judge Kiely I knew that I did not want to disappoint him. This was the beginning of my recovery. Being a female veteran and the first and only one of that nature put me in a spotlight. "I was lucky enough that the VA went to bat for me". (Judge Kiely's exact words) That statement changed my entire perspective.

After only being in the program for four months I had a job at the VA, my own apartment, my driver's license, a car, a support group and a desire to achieve.

In 2016 I was approached by a friend who invited me to a veteran's charity group called Pointman Ministries. This happened to be around the same time Judge Kiely had reached out to the group for support of a mentor program. I attended a conference in Indianapolis called "Justice For Vets." Although I have not had very many opportunities to mentor anyone, it is still a reward to give back what has been given to me.

Today I am a mentor for vet court, I own my home, I am an asset to society, I am financially stable, I've been working at the VA for 11 years with 16 years of federal service. I am now the Supervisor of Environmental Management Services. My life would not be the same without the help from Judge Kiely and the Vet Court Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Heather Supples". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Heather Supples



**Pauli, Celia M**

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**From:** Will, Tyson  
**Sent:** Friday, March 8, 2024 10:05 AM  
**To:** Ware, Mignon; Pauli, Celia M  
**Subject:** Fwd: Project Smores

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**From:** Jonathan Haygood <jonathanhaygood4@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 8, 2024 8:23 AM  
**To:** Will, Tyson <TWill@Vanderburghgov.org>  
**Subject:** Project Smores

\*\*\*\* This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email. \*\*\*\*

Hello

I want to take the time to personally take the time to thank Judge Kiely. He has shown empathy towards many of us on our journey to self improvement. He will often take the time to put himself in our shoes. Personally, that makes me feel like I am not just a name on a list to him. I thought it was pretty cool to hang out with him whenever we had the chance to play softball together. In moments like those I saw more than a judge but a friend who I could confide in. Since I first met him he took the time to get to know me personally. I hope he continues to bless others as he has blessed me.

Thank you  
Jonathan Haygood